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STATUS OF THE AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT

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Q: HAVE OTHER USG AGENCIES CONTRIBUTED FUNDS TO THE AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT OR DOES USIA PLAN TO SEEK ADDITIONAL FUNDS FROM SUCH SOURCES?

A: To date, no other U.S. Government agencies have contributed funds to the Afghan Media Project.

Q: IS THE AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT UNDERFUNDED?

In fiscal year 1986 Congress appropriated \$500,000 for the media project. Provision was also made for the Administration to request an additional \$500,000 in fiscal year 1987. USIA determined to allocate an additional amount from its regular appropriation rather than include the media project as a special budgetary item. It is anticipated that funds available will be sufficient to cover all necessary program costs through fiscal year 1987.

Q: HAVE OTHER USG AGENCIES GIVEN ANY TYPE OF SUPPORT TO THE AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT?

A: Yes. The Department of Defense, under the provisions of the McCollum Amendment (PL 99-145, Sec. 2547), has provided certain items of excess media-related property to USIA for the project in Pakistan and for use by existing Afghan information groups to help them expand their capabilities to increase the flow of news and information on Afghanistan to the international media.

Q: HAS THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL PROVIDED FUNDS TO USIA FOR THIS PROJECT?

A: No.

Q: HAS THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN DELAYED THE PROJECT?

A: The USG has been engaged in ongoing discussions with the Government of Pakistan concerning the implementation of the Afghan Media Project. It is not our policy to comment on the details of conversations between foreign governments and our own.

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Q: HAS THE TRAINING PROGRAM STARTED?

A: Yes. BU began training 30 Afghan refugees in Peshawar on January 31, 1987. The trainees were principally drawn from existing Afghan information groups. The training program covers print media, still photojournalism, and video. It is anticipated that the first training phase will last for 6 weeks after which the results of the program will be evaluated and a determination made regarding the nature of the next segment of training.

Q: AFTER THE TRAINING IS COMPLETED, WILL THE TRAINEES BE EMPLOYED AND WILL THEY BE SENT INTO AFGHANISTAN?

A: The trainees were drawn principally from existing Afghan information groups in Peshawar and it is anticipated that they will return to those organizations with whom they are presently affiliated. It can be assumed that these trainees will be working in all phases of media both in and outside of Pakistan, including working in Afghanistan, to increase the flow of news and information to the international media.

Q: IS BOSTON UNIVERSITY PLANNING TO TRAIN AFGHANS IN THE U.S. UNDER THE GRANT PROGRAM?

A: The present grant agreement does not call for the training of Afghans in the U.S. However, it was anticipated that at a later stage in the development of the program some academic training in communications and journalism for Afghan refugees could be considered and this is still a possibility. (BU should be referred to for any additional information on this subject.)

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